

YOUNG ADULT

SUNDAY SCHOOL • SPRING QUARTER, 2018 • MARCH, APRIL, MAY

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

PRACTICAL RELIGION COMING FROM THE ACCEPTANCE AND PRACTICE OF SOUND DOCTRINE

QUARTERLY AIM: Students will learn that accepting and practicing sound doctrine will help them understand their relationship with God, people and their church.

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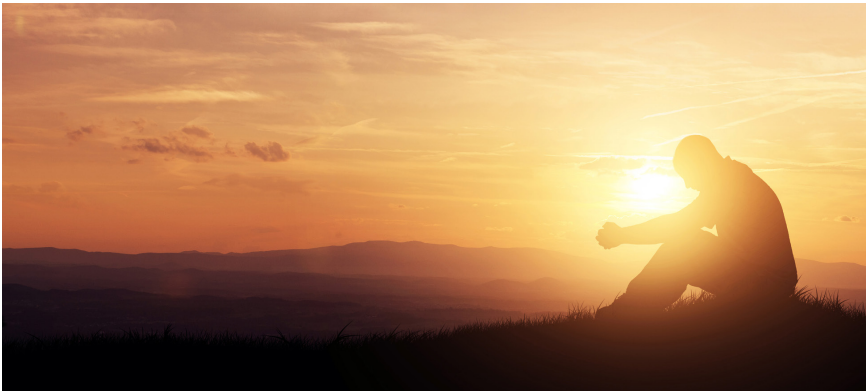
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TITUS, A CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN AND MINISTER

Lesson Text: Titus 1:4; 2 Corinthians 8:23

Principle: Christian gentlemen put themselves at God's disposal and become special and unique people.



No one knows what Titus looked like. What a man truly is outweighs what he looks like. Titus was a Christian gentleman and minister.

The book of Titus is a Pastoral Epistle written by the apostle Paul to his beloved friend Titus. The book is filled with common sense instructions for Christians and churches.

In my research, I have not followed an elaborate analysis of the letter using a central thought. It is my opinion that a book must be stretched quite far to make a central thought work. Furthermore, it is rather hard, for me anyway, to picture Paul writing down a thought, let's say in the middle of a letter, and writing the letter based on that one thought. I think the man just sat down and wrote. A theme, however, does emerge in Paul's letter to Titus: practical religion comes from the acceptance and practice of sound doctrine.

It is not unusual for ego to hold a man—even ministers—back. The nineteenth century baptist preacher, Joseph Fort Newton, wrote, "An egotist is not a man who thinks too much of himself; he is a man who thinks too little

of other people.” Titus never, as far as my research has determined, allowed ego, what he wanted, to dominate his thinking or his actions. Titus loved Jesus; he loved the apostle Paul, and he loved churches. With little thought of his own goals and aspirations, Titus went wherever Paul sent him and did whatever Paul asked him to do.

This doesn’t mean Titus was a wimp and didn’t think for himself. It means Titus wasn’t consumed with self and that he believed what God wanted was more important than what he wanted. For example, Crete wasn’t a well-thought of place. One of their own prophets wrote, “Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies” (Titus 1:12). Crete, therefore, wasn’t a popular tourist destination, and it is possible that Titus didn’t particularly like the place, but God had a job for him on Crete, and Titus, without griping or complaining, set things in order and appointed pastors to oversee churches in every city (Titus 1:5).

Often, life doesn’t turn out the way we expect. We have our ideas, our goals and heartfelt aspirations. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this; we should have dreams and lofty expectations. Furthermore, if we have an opportunity to live our dreams, we may regret it if we don’t grasp the opportunity when it knocks on our door. What should we do when our dreams don’t materialize? What should we do when we get stuck...on Crete? Like Titus, we should be Christian gentlemen.

EXPLORING THE PRINCIPLE



THINK ABOUT IT!

Salvation is not common in the sense that it is ordinary or unclean in the Jewish tradition (Acts 10:14).

Salvation is common in the sense that it is for everyone, Jews and Gentiles.

Without the shed blood of Jesus there would be no remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22).

The blood of Jesus is “precious” because He is a Lamb “without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19).

Titus Was a Child of the Common Salvation

The apostle Paul called Titus “mine own son after the common faith” (Titus 1:4). Paul had led Titus to the Lord, and he felt toward Titus as his spiritual son, the same way a natural father feels toward a natural son. Titus, to Paul, was his “own son after the common faith.”

To be effective servants like Titus, we must be saved, that is, we must be children of God. Titus was Paul’s “own son after the common faith,” faith common to every Christian. Faith is common in the sense that it is available to everyone. Titus, therefore, heard the gospel; he believed the gospel, and God saved him. Salvation is the starting point of every Christian life.

To become children of God, we must experience a new birth. Very early in His ministry, Jesus

told Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). The concept of a new birth confused Nicodemus, and it confuses people today. In fact, Nicodemus was so confused that he asked Jesus, “How can a man be born

when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (John 3:4). Jesus replied, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:6, 7). Children of God experience physical and spiritual births. Physical birth occurs when we are birthed by our mothers. Spiritual birth occurs when we believe that Jesus is the Son of God and call upon Him.

Titus was a child of the common faith. He believed in his heart that Jesus is the Son of God. I don’t know what kind of man Titus was before God saved him. I do know that Titus was a Gentile. He ministered to Gentiles; he accompanied Paul to the Jerusalem Council to substantiate the fact that rituals, such as circumcision, have nothing to do with salvation. Christians are not bound by the Law (Acts 15:2; Galatians 2:1-3; Titus 1:4).

Titus Was Willing To Be Used in Any Capacity

Titus wasn’t worried about what God wanted or where God wanted him to go. His attitude was basically that he would go where God wanted him to go and do what God wanted him to do. Titus, a Greek and a Gentile, demonstrated his submissive spirit by attending the Jerusalem Council. Titus was willing to be a test case and prove to the legalistic, Christian Jews in Jerusalem that salvation was for all men, even uncircumcised men (Acts 15:1; Galatians 2:1-3).

Paul and Barnabas, men who preached the gospel to the Gentiles, forced the Jerusalem Council. Judaizing teachers had tried to infiltrate churches they had established and taught Gentile believers that they had to keep the Law of Moses to be saved. The legalists associated circumcision with salvation and believed, if you weren’t circumcised, you couldn’t be saved.

Imagine how Titus must have felt when he arrived at Jerusalem with Paul. There were

The blood of Jesus is precious because His blood purchased salvation for everyone, and everyone can be saved (Romans 1:16).



Lord, I am willing to receive what you give; to lack what you withhold; to relinquish what you take; to suffer what you inflict; to be what you require. And, Lord, if others are to be your messengers to me, I am willing to hear and heed what they have to say. Amen

It is not unusual for God’s will to conflict with our will.

God may require that we serve Him in a place we don’t want to be.

That is okay.

There is nothing more satisfying than submitting to the will of God.

people present—Christians—who believed circumcision was necessary for salvation (Acts 15:1). Titus was an uncircumcised Gentile who must have felt uncomfortable because many of his fellow-believers thought he was unclean. They snarled up their noses and refused to fellowship with him simply because he hadn't followed Hebrew tradition and submitted to circumcision.

Titus, who was willing to be used in any capacity, didn't let religious bigots shipwreck his faith. His Christian demeanor, in the face of prejudice, said, "Look at me! I'm a Gentile. I'm saved. I don't keep the Law, and I haven't been circumcised. You don't have to keep the Law of Moses to obtain God's grace. Salvation, without restrictions, is for me, for you and all who believe."

The Jerusalem Council occurred early in Titus' Christian life. Yet, he was willing—as a young Christian—to be used of God in any capacity.



"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (1 Timothy 3:1).

"Desire" (*oregomi* in Greek) means to reach out for something, stretch oneself toward; to strive for, aspire to, or long for.

God places a desire for ministry in the men whom He calls.

God's call encourages men to reach out to ministry.

God's call encourages men to stretch like a sprinter crossing a finish line for ministry.

God's call encourages men to strive for, to aspire to, and to long for ministry.

What are you aspiring to do in your life?

Titus Became a Minister of the Gospel

Paul called Titus "my partner and fellow-helper" (2 Corinthians 8:23). "Partner" comes from the Greek word *koinonos* and means a sharer. "Fellowhelper" comes from the Greek word *sunergos* and means an energetic fellow worker. Ministry was important to the apostle Paul. The ministry was so important to Paul that he laid his life on the line daily to advance the kingdom of God (2 Corinthians 11:16-28). Yet, Paul shared his ministry with Titus and considered him a "partner and fellowhelper."

Think about it! Paul considered Titus, a young man, his partner and fellow worker, a person he could depend on to do a job, do it right and do it well.

Every now and then God calls and places a man in the ministry. Having experienced God's call, Paul wrote, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Timothy 1:12). The call to preach is a very real desire God places in the hearts of men. "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (1 Timothy 3:1). Although the call to preach is an overwhelming responsibility, there is

nothing to fear. The call is God's way of letting a man know God has higher plans for his life. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9). If God is calling you to preach, don't be afraid, and don't feel inadequate. God enables the men He calls to ministry. Answer the call, be faithful, do the work, and God will take care of you.

When God calls a man, He changes his life and his plans. I wanted to be an English teacher, a history teacher or a lawyer, but God changed my plans. I'm not teaching in a public school, and I'm not arguing important cases before the Supreme Court of the United States, but I have had a good life and, along the way, I have helped a few people.

When God calls a man, he strengthens the man for ministry. I teach young preachers at Central Arkansas Baptist Bible Institute. I share the Word of God and personal experiences with my students. A question I'm frequently asked is, "Do you think I can do the work of a minister?" I always answer, "Yes," because whom God calls He enables (1 Timothy 1:12). If a man is called of God, God will strengthen and enable him to do things that he never thought he could do. Titus submitted to God's will; God strengthened him, and he did a great work, even among "liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" (Titus 1:12).

Titus Was a Unique and Special Person

Titus had that special something that made him a very special person. In fact, his presence made life a little brighter for his fellow workers.

Titus was a comforting person. "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus" (2 Corinthians 7:6). The presence of Titus brought comfort to the downcast.

Titus was a joyous person. "Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all" (verse 13). The presence of Titus brought joy in less than joyous situations.

Titus was missed when he wasn't around. "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not

Does ministry keep popping into your mind?

Perhaps, God has called you to be a minister?



Christian gentlemen are unique and special persons. They comfort those who need comforting. They bring joy to those who are downcast. They are missed when they are not around. They continually serve God despite pressures from the world.

Titus may be known for the letter Paul wrote him, but he was a Christian gentlemen. He is an example to Christian workers in every generation.

Titus my brother” (2 Corinthians 2:13). The presence of Titus brought comfort and joy. When Titus was absent, his fellow workers, including the apostle Paul, missed him.

Titus was a minister who could set things in order. “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee” (Titus 1:5). There is a difference between being busy and working. Titus knew the difference; he worked and set things in order.

Titus was dependable, which wasn’t true for all of Paul’s fellow workers. Demas, for example, was Paul’s fellow worker for a while (Philemon 24), but at a time when he really needed Demas, Paul sadly stated, “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10). In the same Scripture, however, we see Titus ministering in Dalmatia, continuing the Lord’s work. Despite everything—even persecution and prison—Titus remained faithful to God.

GRASPING THE PRINCIPLE

A Scottish philosopher wrote, “Everywhere in life the true question is, not what we have gained, but what we do.” You will not find a place in the New Testament where Titus isn’t serving God and building churches. Titus may not have accumulated great wealth, and he may not have gained historic fame, but Titus was a doer and loved by those who knew him.

Churches need men and women who comfort those who need comfort, bring joy and refresh spirits, and are missed when they are not around. They set things in order and get things done; they are dependable, and day in and day out they keep God’s work moving forward. Churches need Christian gentlemen who have the spirit of Titus.

DISCUSSING THE PRINCIPLE

1. What does it mean to be a “son after the common faith” (Titus 1:4)?
2. Explain the new birth (John 3:1-6).
3. Why did Titus accompany the apostle Paul to the Jerusalem Council?
4. What was the Jerusalem Council about?
5. Why is it important to be willing to be used in any capacity?
6. What is the significance of Titus being a “partner and fellowhelper” (2 Corinthians 8:23) to Paul?

7. How does a man know when God has called him to be a minister?
8. Discuss the five traits found in Christian gentlemen.

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLE

As a child of the common faith (salvation), I will submit to God and allow Him to use me anytime and anyplace. I will be a partner and fellow worker with my pastor and fellow-Christians. I will be a comforting person, a joyous person and a person who is missed when he is not around. I will do things the right way; I will set things in order, and, like Titus, I will be a person my fellow-Christians can count on.